

CAPITOL CAMPUS READER



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Capitol Campus

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Continuing Saga Of Guns On Campus

By Young Inyang

In our last issue, we carried the story of a proposal by the student government to recommend that the campus police officers be armed with guns.

Since then, the question of guns or no guns for campus police has become the talk of the "town".

In bars, restaurants, or dining halls, the talk - or rather the question - is how bad crime is on campus to necessitate police officers carrying guns?

It is fair to point out that the police aren't considering carrying guns, but the student government has made the proposal. In fact, Chief James H. Paul, would not even comment on the issue.

To feel how the campus pulse throbs on this issue, a random, across-the-board survey was conducted.

A total of 163 persons were asked what they thought about this proposal. Of this number, 144 were students, 13 were members of the staff, and 6 were faculty members.

Over 74 percent of the students, about 77 percent of the of the staff, and over 83 percent of the faculty opposed any guns on the campus, according to the survey results.

About 15 percent of the students, 15 percent of the staff and 16 percent of the faculty voted "yes" to the proposal. The remainder were neutral. One interesting, or rather ironical, aspect of the results is that over 62 percent of the students opposed to guns on the campus are resident students.

"To defend the property of the campus" was a common reason given by faculty members who support the proposal that campus police officers should be armed with guns.

Also in supporting the proposal, some students and members of the staff see guns as a "symbol of security, not danger."

Most of those who remained neutral complained that they did not know enough about the subject. Some did not know just who would be armed - the sworn police officers on campus, and/or the student guards.

In an interview, Chief Paul said, "it is totally inconceivable that the Department of Security would even consider arming the student patrol."

He gave the assurance that, if approved, only three officers and himself, who are sworn security police officers in the State of Pennsylvania, would carry guns.

In opposing the idea of anyone carrying a gun on campus, a member of the staff doubted "that the carrying of guns by the campus police force is going to keep anyone from committing crime on the campus, any more than the carrying of guns by the city police, keeps anyone from committing a crime on the streets."

This staff member felt "rather certain that anyone caught in the act of committing a crime could be subdued by

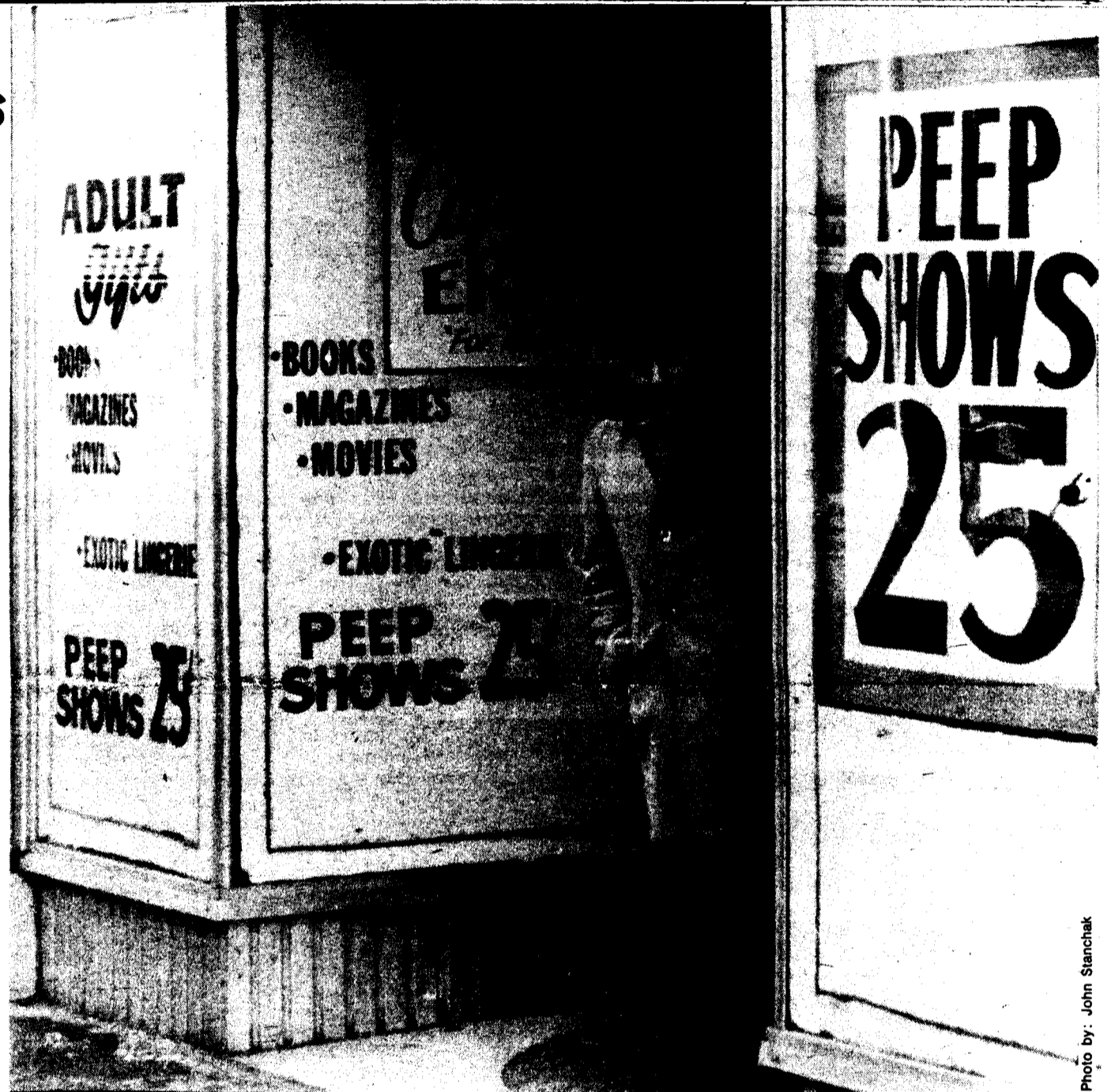


Photo by: John Stanchak

Don't look at me like that. I only stepped in here to get my hands warm.

other means rather than shooting." A member of the faculty said, "There should be strong and extensive evidence of both the need for guns, and the assurance that they would be used only in the most extreme cases. Thus far," she continued, "I have heard no evidence that crime on campus is increasing, that it is of a violent sort which demands reaction by armed personnel, or that personnel have been placed in dangerous situations and threatened with violence because they are not armed."

"If this is the case", she went on, "then students, faculty and staff should receive a full report, and any decision should be based on open discussion of the report."

The majority of students who voted "no" believe that there are insufficient reasons to justify the campus police officers carrying guns. If the need for a gun arises, some students suggested, the local city police could be called.

While lack of data or known evidence of the extent and frequency of violent crimes on campus causes some to be neutral, it causes a land-slide majority of students, staff and faculty to oppose the proposal.

If the student government comes out with these facts and figures, people might reconsider their positions.

Affairs Committee

By Tim Adams

The Student Affairs Committee at Capitol is concerned with projects that relate to school activities, and especially matters that directly affect students.

The committee is composed of students, faculty and administration.

This year's committee has dealt with such issues as the Buckley Amendment regarding confidentiality of student records, and campus security.

The Buckley Amendment has created as many problems as it has eliminated. For example, no longer can grades by professors, nor can information regarding a student be given over the phone.

A student who wishes to release records to prospective employers must verify in writing his or her willingness to release those forms, and submit this verification to the Records Office.

The formation of a subgroup on security is also one of the committees projects. This group will concern itself with the operation of the Department of Safety and Security Services.

The four member group consists of

two faculty members, John Jones and Lemuel Molovinsky, and two students representatives appointed by SGA, Ray Martin and Kitty Nestor.

This subgroup will be an ongoing advisory body involved in the hiring and evaluation of security personnel. Also, it will review in-service training programs, policies and manuals.

This year's chairman of the Student Affairs Committee is Dr. Duane Shuttlesworth, Assistant Professor of Psychosocial Science and Psychology. Any student who wishes information, or would like to offer suggestions to the

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Weekend Weather

Eastern Pennsylvania outlook for Friday through Sunday: On Friday there will be variable cloudiness, with a chance of snow flurries. Saturday and Sunday should be fair. Low temperatures should range from the low teens to the low 20's. Highs will be in the 30's.